SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (TAMIL NADU) 1987-88

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a Statement (in English and Hindi) showing the Supplementary Demands for Grants for Expenditure of the Government of Tamil Nadu for the year 1987-88.

THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS) 1988-89—contd.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am not against the introduction of computerisation, I am not against modernisation or sophistication in administration and other areas. But we must see that employment opportunities cannot be affected by introduction of computerisation and modernisation. That is more important. If we go through the total number of employees, unfortunately, in Railways, the total number of employees is declining. The development is going on automatically, there should be increase in the number of employees and employment opportunities. But contrary to the reality, what we find is that the number of employees is declining. I would like to remind for the consideration of the House that in 1984-85, the number of staff was 1613280. In the year 1986-87, it has declined to 1612225, that is the number has decreased by 1055. What is the reason for that? Either it is due to computerisation or due to any other reason. The hon. Minister is expected to answer this. He must see that the employment opportunities cannot be allowed to decline. What we see here is that more than 2 lakhs employees are treated as casual labourers. Of course, casual labourers are indispensable in every area but there must be some reason for this. But for how long they will continue as casual labourers? They are working in the Railway Ministry for more than 10 years or 15 years. The argument from the other side is that wherever there is a permanent vacancy, we give priority to the casual labourer. But it is not a cogent argument. You must create more permanent vacancies. That is more important. You cannot keep the vacancies at present as permanent. According to the enlargement of the department permanent vacancies must be according to the load of work. The number of permanent vacancies also must be increased. But instead, you only utilise the casual labourers.

Then another more painful factor in this respect is that when they are absorbed, according to my information, their earlier services are not counted. They have been working in the department for the last 10 or 15 years. After 15 years, they are regularised. But after 15 years, if the earlier services rendered by them are not counted, then what will be their pension, what will be their increment, what will be their promotion? All these will be affected. That is why I appeal to the honourable Minister: (1) the number of permanent vacancies should be increased in accordance with the load of work; and (2) when the employees are recruited to the permanent vacancies, their past service should be counted. Then alone will the employees be benefited.

Unfortunately this Budget has allotted more funds only to the Central Railway and the Northern Railway and the South is totally neglected as usual, especially the two important schemes, as mentioned by Mr. Gopalsamy—the Madras Rapid Transit System and the Karur-Dindigul line. How much amount has been allotted for these two projects? Only Rs. 14 crores for the Madras Rapid Transit System Rs 9 crores and for the Karur-Dindigul line Rs. 5 crores